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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 12/22/08

INDEX:

- (1) Anxieties and expectations of "ABB" approach (Yomiuri)
- (2) Verification of SDF Iraq dispatch: Overview necessary for future (Asahi)
- (3) Editorial: Switch to omni-directional diplomacy with SDF withdrawal from Iraq (Asahi)
- (4) Shaky alliance-5 years on the battlefield (Part 1): Thin-ice landings on airport under attack (Yomiuri)
- (5) Shaky alliance: Five years at the battlefield (Part 2): Reversing stance, U.S. calls for civilian dispatch (Yomiuri)
- (6) Nishimatsu Construction-related political organization donated 420 million yen to politicians, including Mori, Nikai and Ozawa (Akahata)
- (7) Former Prime Minister Mori: "New Nakagawa party" is possible (Nikkei)
- (8) TOP HEADLINES
- (9) EDITORIALS

ARTICLES:

- (1) Anxieties and expectations of "ABB" approach

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)

December 21, 2008

By political reporter Ayumi Tsuda

The Japanese Foreign Ministry distributed to journalists in late November a paper titled: "Dispel five misunderstandings about the incoming Obama administration and Japan-U.S. relations." The paper lists five growing concerns: (1) The new administration might make light of Japan; (2) the administration might make direct approaches to China, bypassing Japan; (3) the administration might make concessions to North Korea; (4) Japan-U.S. friction might be reignited; and (5) the Japanese Foreign Ministry has few connections with the U.S. Democratic Party members. The paper expresses ministry views denying these negative possibilities.

The paper first questions whether the next administration would treat Japan lightly. It argues to the contrary: "The incoming president understands the importance of the Japan-U.S. alliance as indispensable, being based on common values and interests and he has expressed his support for it." It also states: "The Clinton administration signed an agreement to return the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station and issued the joint security declaration." In response to concern that there are few ties with Democratic Party members, the paper notes confidently: "In preparation for the inauguration of a new administration, Japan has taken necessary steps from more than a year ago."

President-election Barack Obama has named more members for his administration in the run-up to the inauguration of his administration in January. He has brought in many persons close to

TOKYO 00003483 002 OF 009

former President Bill Clinton, including Hillary Clinton's appointment as Secretary of State.

The aim of the Foreign Ministry's release of the paper ahead of the inauguration of a the first Democratic administration in eight years was to dispel pessimistic views growing in Japan about the future of Japan-U.S. relations. The spread of pessimism was touched off by a China-centered Asia policy platform written by Senator Clinton last fall. But at the root of such pessimism has been fear that the new administration might take an approach contradictory to the policies taken by the Bush administration.

To make a clear distinction from those of the previous Clinton administration, Republican President Bush significantly changed foreign and domestic policy directions. This stance was called an "anything but Clinton (ABC) approach."

In the days of the Clinton administration, economic friction occurred often between Japan and the U.S. In contrast, Japan-U.S. relations under the Bush administration were in extremely good shape, in part because of a relationship of trust established between President Bush and then Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. That is why many are now worried that the Obama administration might take an anything but Bush (ABB) approach.

Meanwhile expectations are growing of the incoming Democratic administration in Okinawa Prefecture, which expects the new U.S. administration to translate the Futenma-return plan decided by former President Clinton into practice. Governor Hirokazu Nakaima said: "I have the impression that Mr. Clinton had sensitive feelings toward Okinawa. I would also like to talk with Senator Hillary Clinton."

It is uncertain, though, what view Clinton has about this issue. A person close to Obama said: "It is impossible to decide what approach the U.S. should take to the Futenma issue before a new cabinet is formed through a general election in Japan."

In the same way as Japan concerned about moves by the incoming Obama administration, the U.S. also seems to be nervous about Japan's unstable political situation.

(2) Verification of SDF Iraq dispatch: Overview necessary for future

By Hiroshi Nakanishi, professor at Kyoto University

The dispatch of Self-Defense Force troops to Iraq was a major turning point in Japan's postwar foreign and security policies. The SDF has participated in UN peacekeeping operations (PKO), with national security as its basic policy, since the end of the Cold-War period. Global opinion was split over the propriety of the Iraq war. The Coalition of the Willing was formed from countries that cooperated with U.S. and British-led operations, while the rest of the world remained opposed to the conflict. Under such a situation, the Koizumi administration decided to support the U.S.-led war.

Waging war in Iraq might have not been the right decision for the U.S., but Japan's decision to support the U.S. was not wrong. Japan

TOKYO 00003483 003 OF 009

was able to achieve politically and diplomatically magnificent results by having the SDF perform considerably safe missions, although it certainly was favored with luck.

But the approach taken by Prime Minister Koizumi created problems for the future. His replies on the location of a noncombat zone were illogical. It was a peculiar decision by a peculiar prime minister under a peculiar political environment. It is dangerous for confused replies to be accepted. Japan has sent Self-Defense Force (SDF) troops overseas based on an unrealistic argument. If anything should happen, how will Japanese politics take responsibility? Dispatched SDF troops must have had such a question.

I do not think that Japanese troops must take part in multinational forces without fail based on the Japan-U.S. security treaty. As a strategy, it is important for Japanese troops to give priority to international cooperation and peace building. It is important for the SDF to join hands with nongovernmental organizations (NGO). It is also necessary to work out a mechanism for SDF members to join UN PKO in Africa and the Middle East in cooperation with China, South Korea, and Southeast Asian countries.

The dispatch of SDF troops to Iraq has left major problems. The government should responsibly overview the Iraq dispatch and hold discussions in the Diet.

(3) Editorial: Switch to omni-directional diplomacy with SDF withdrawal from Iraq

Air Self-Defense Force transport planes, deployed to carry out airlift activities in Iraq, have left for Japan, completing a five-year mission.

In spite of a split in public opinion, then Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who backed the Iraq war, pushed through the SDF dispatch to Iraq. SDF personnel carried out airlift activities under intense heat in Iraq.

The ASDF airlift squadron often took evasive action as transport planes detected danger. Bombs exploded near the vehicles of the Ground Self-Defense Force. It was lucky that there were no SDF personnel who suffered casualties.

Germany and France did not participate in the Iraq war. Spain and Italy withdrew their military units due to a change in government. But Japan's SDF continued its activities. This was a notable achievement for the Japanese government.

Japan has intently followed the United States for about seven years, starting from the 9/11 terrorist attack, and Afghan and Iraq wars. The SDF dispatch to Iraq was a symbol of such one-sided diplomacy.

The Iraq war resulted in a devastating consequence. The United

States failed to justify the war, since there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. There have occurred a number of violent incidents in Iraq after the dictator was toppled. The war on terror has instead emboldened terrorists and spread them.

The taskforce on external affairs, an advisory panel to Prime

TOKYO 00003483 004 OF 009

Minister Koizumi, in its 2002 report released before the Iraq war started, pointed out that the United States had begun to lose its spirit of tolerance toward the objections and different values of others, and that as a result, the spirit of U.S. diplomacy would likely weaken. Unfortunately, such concern proved right.

However, the Japanese government and the leaders of the ruling parties never looked at this fact straight on, but have only kept silent.

Japan's postwar foreign policy is described as always following in the U.S.' footsteps, but it was rare for Japan to resort to such monochromatic diplomacy.

Looking at the 1990s, the Hashimoto and Obuchi administrations actively carried out diplomacy not only with such Asian countries as China and South Korea but also with Russia and Middle Eastern countries. Those governments had a flexible idea of boosting national interests by carrying out omni-directional diplomacy with Japan-U.S. relations as the bedrock of Japan's diplomacy.

At present, diplomacy with neighboring countries that was destroyed the Koizumi administration is now gradually being restored. It has been decided that a summit of the leaders of Japan, China and South Korea would be held once a year. In the United States, the Bush administration, which has focused on unilateral action, will now end, and Obama administration, which advocates the importance of international cooperation, will soon be inaugurated.

Now is a good chance for Japan to restore omni-directional diplomacy. Japan can play an active role in dealing with such international issues as the economic crisis and global warming. Japan could contribute on its own way to the reconstruction and stability of Afghanistan and Iraq. Japan should revitalize its participation in UN peace-keeping activities without being bound by the context of the Japan-U.S. alliance.

Japan should make the withdrawal of the SDF from Iraq a starting point to break away from the diplomacy of always following in the footsteps of the United States.

(4) Shaky alliance-5 years on the battlefield (Part 1): Thin-ice landings on airport under attack

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
December 18, 2008

One day in the summer of 2007, Air Self-Defense Force Lt. Gen. Kunio Orita's telephone rang. Orita was the commander of the ASDF Air Support Command, which locates its headquarters in the western Tokyo city of Fuchu, and the command was in charge of commanding the ASDF's airlift activities in Iraq. The phone call was from the commanding officer of an ASDF detachment based in Kuwait.

"I had a report from the captain right now," the commanding officer said over the telephone. He went on: "Baghdad Airport is being attacked with rockets. We need your judgment."

An ASDF C-130 cargo plane in flight was instructed by a U.S. military air traffic controller to standby over the airport. Above and below the ASDF transport, five planes including military aircraft were also turning around at intervals of 200 meters. If the

TOKYO 00003483 005 OF 009

ASDF plane turned back because a battle was going on, it could run into a midair collision with other planes flying around.

Orita turned it over in his mind. "Leave it to the captain. I will take responsibility." So saying, Orita hung up the phone. There was too little information to judge. An hour later, he received a report about the C-130's safe landing. That one hour was tremendously long, Orita recalls.

During the ASDF's five-year mission in Iraq, the Air Support Command was asked by the ASDF detachment only once at that time for an emergency judgment. In April 2007, U.S. forces went into operations in full swing to mop up armed insurgents. After that, the ASDF troops were always at the risk of their lives.

The C-130s were equipped with a missile sensor when they were sent to Iraq. If and when the sensor were to be activated, the alarm would sound and missile-guiding flare bombs would be fired. On the cockpit screen is an arrow that shows the direction of an approaching missile.

"I was frightened many times by the alarm beep sound," says Maj. Tomoyuki Sakai, who was a C-130 captain on the airlift mission to Iraq from April through August 2007. Sakai was extremely nervous 15 minutes before landing in Baghdad. That is because a plane in a landing approach is within the range (about 4 kilometers) of an armed group's antiaircraft missiles. There is no hard evidence to show that the ASDF aircraft was ever targeted. However, the captain, as soon as the alarm sounds, will try to make a random steep approach (RSA) with right and left turns. Six other crewmen onboard will look out of the windows to scout out for missiles. A missile once flew ahead with white smoke curling, according to Sakai's account.

In the summer of 2006, the Ground Self-Defense Force withdrew from its Samawah camp. After that, three ASDF C-130 cargo planes, based in Kuwait, made flights to and from Baghdad and sometimes to and from the northern and southern Iraqi cities of Arbil and Ali. Asked by multinational air force headquarters, the ASDF airlifted U.S. soldiers, foodstuffs, and supplies everyday except on Saturdays and Sundays. The ASDF crew continued their flights over battlefields. They flew once or twice a week. On every Wednesday, however, their task was hard as they were on a shuttle flight to and from Arbil via Baghdad. Their flight was seven hours long. "I lost nearly 3 kilograms in one day," Sakai said with a sour smile.

The ASDF was able to wind up its mission in Iraq without accidents. This is greatly owing to the existence of U.S. forces. For example, U.S. air instructors boarded the ASDF C-130s before their Iraq mission and they often gave training and advice to the ASDF crew for how to dodge missile attacks. When the ASDF was actually on the Iraq mission, U.S. forces kept backing up the ASDF mission by providing threat information and being ready to rescue the ASDF crew in the event of emergencies. This is a result of working hard together as a member of the multinational forces. "Alliance is not paper but is solidarity," former U.S. Secretary of State Kissinger said. This is a message calling Japan into question after Iraq.

Japan and the United States were said to be in a golden age, and the Self-Defense Forces' activities in Iraq shored up the bilateral relationship. The SDF's Iraq mission has now been completed. There will be a change of administration in the United States, and the

TOKYO 00003483 006 OF 009

international situation is now at a turning point. Will the Japan-U.S. alliance go ahead or retreat? This series will look into the alliance that is now at a crossroads.

(5) Shaky alliance: Five years at the battlefield (Part 2):
Reversing stance, U.S. calls for civilian dispatch

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Abridged slightly)
December 19, 2008

Attended by Japanese trading firms and construction companies, a Japan-Iraq economic forum will be held early next year in Iraq. It will be the first such event since the Iraq war started in 2003. "Thanks to the Self-Defense Forces, we are now able to claim the

right to do business in Iraq," a connected source said.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) will send before year's end its personnel to the northern Iraqi city of Arbil on a regular basis.

When the government decided in December 2003 on a Self-Defense Force displacement basic plan, then Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi played up the significance of SDF activities, saying: "We have to prove not only in word but also in action that the Japan-U.S. alliance is compatible with international cooperation." Fruitful SDF activities have resulted in some room for civilian activities.

The United States is likely to shift its weight from Iraq to Afghanistan under the next Obama administration. Washington is already turning its attention to civilian activities in place of the SDF dispatch.

On December 9, a discussion was held by ambassadors of eight countries that have sent troops to Afghanistan. In the session, U.S. Ambassador to Japan J. Thomas Schieffer asked: "It is understandable that under the Constitution, (Japan) cannot send the SDF, but what about civilians?" In response, British Ambassador David Warren said: "I believe it is possible to provide helicopter transport services by civilians." In a press conference on December 15, U.S. Department of State Japan Desk Director Daniel Russel said: "We strongly hope that (Japan) will send specialists, such as police officers and nurses."

In reality, activities by JICA and other organizations have achieved solid results. At the inaugural ceremony of the Kabul International Airport Terminal Building held on November 6, JICA President Sadako Ogata pledged that her organization would continue its activities. Even so, there have been strong calls for the dispatch of Japanese civilians (to Afghanistan). The calls resulted from strong disappointment with Tokyo's failure to swiftly improve the law to utilize the SDF overseas.

Former White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan wrote a memoir titled What Happened: Inside the Bush White House and Washington's Culture of Deception. He also wrote in the preface to his Japanese-version memoir: "Whether it was correct or not, Japan has gained strong influence over the United States owing to Prime Minister Koizumi's decision."

Japan has successfully deepened mutual trust, the core of any alliance, by supporting the (Iraq) war, which was not necessarily popular in the international community, and by dispatching the SDF

TOKYO 00003483 007 OF 009

against all odds.

Many observers think the government made the decision to pull the SDF out of Iraq at the best timing. The reason is because seven countries, including South Korea, have also announced to withdraw their troops from the country by the end of the year and also because Japan's withdrawal in this transitional period is unlikely to draw fire either from the current or the next U.S. administration.

Nevertheless, a review of the government's interpretation of the right to collective self-defense has been shelved due to the political turmoil after the Koizumi administration. The realignment of U.S. forces in Japan centering on Okinawa is also lagging behind schedule, and the Aso administration remains unable to decide on greater support for Afghanistan and measures against piracy. Even though the Democratic Party of Japan led by Ichiro Ozawa advocates support for mainland Afghanistan, the party has insisted that the Maritime Self-Defense Force's fueling mission in the Indian Ocean was unconstitutional, causing the United States to become increasingly distrustful.

Contrary to the good reputation of the SDF mission in Iraq, the foundation of the Japan-U.S. alliance has begun to shake.

(6) Nishimatsu Construction-related political organization donated

420 million yen to politicians, including Mori, Nikai and Ozawa

SHIMBUN AKAHATA (Page 15) (Full)
December 21, 2008

Shimbun Akahata learned on December 20 through its own investigation that a political organization established by a person associated with the Nishimatsu Construction Co., a second-tier general construction contractor based in Minato Ward, Tokyo, has been doling out donations totaling more than 400 million yen to political circles for more than a decade. A former executive of Nishimura Construction was indicted on the 9th on charge of professional embezzlement for allegedly misappropriating portions of a large slush fund that this executive had accumulated through overseas business operations. The future course of this investigation will be in the spotlight.

The political organization in question is the New Study Group on Political Issues. The name is the same as that of late former Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto's fund management organization. The manager of the Management and Control Department of Nishimatsu Construction on November 1, 1995, established that organization as soon as he retired the company and took office as its representative. The organization was disbanded on December 15, 2006. A former part-time auditor at Nishimatsu Construction served as the accountant there.

According to its political funds report, the study group purchased tickets for political fund-raising parties held by politicians and factions of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in the name of public relations expenses for 12 years from 1995 through 2006. It also doled out more than 420 million yen in donations to political parties and politicians.

Since the retention period for original political funds reports is three years, only reports for 2005 and 2006 were available for

TOKYO 00003483 008 OF 009

inspection at the Internal Affairs Ministry to find the names of politicians who had received donations from the organization.

According the available reports, among LDP members, 4.66 million yen was donated to the Nikai Group led by Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Toshihiro Nikai, 200,000 yen to Nikai, 3.6 million yen to former Transport Minister Takao Fujii, 2 million yen to former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori and former Finance Minister Koji Omi respectively and 1 million yen to former National Public Safety Commission Commissioner Mikio Hayashi.

Among DPJ members, President Ichiro Ozawa received 10 million yen and the DPJ Iwate Prefectural Chapter received 3 million yen.

Heads of local governments also received donations from the organization, including 500,000 yen received by Oita Prefectural Governor Katsusaka Hirose and Shizuoka Prefectural Governor Yoshinobu Ishikawa respectively, 300,000 by Kobe Mayor Tatsuo Yada and 700,000 yen by Mayor Yoshio Sakaguchi of Suita City, Osaka.

Funding resources for those donations were membership fees, which cost 30-8.2 million yen a year, and political funds-raising parties, which the organization held three times a years in the name of the New Century Political and Economic Round -Table meeting.

However, there is some unnatural aspect about the organization's membership system, such as that the membership was 1,410 in 1996, but in 2006, there were only 13 members. It reported that it gained about 6 million yen a year from the sales of party tickets. However, nothing is known about who purchased those party tickets.

Since Nishimatsu Construction's slush funds became an issue, this political organization is urged to clarify its unclear funding flow.

(7) Former Prime Minister Mori: "New Nakagawa party" is possible

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)

December 20, 2008

Appearing on a TBS program yesterday, former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) replied to a question asking whether former Secretary General Hidenao Nakagawa would make a move to realign the political world: "He has talked about the possibility quite a lot. I have heard about such a possibility for some time now." He added: "The LDP and the New Komeito may fail to win a majority in the next House of Representatives election. Some lawmakers might take action to form a new political party under Mr. Nakagawa."

On the possibility of Nakagawa forming a new political party, Mori said: "He might have such an intention, unlike me and other LDP members who have never left the party." Nakagawa has criticized Prime Minister Taro Aso for his announcement of a plan to raise the consumption tax three years from now. Asked about Nakagawa's criticism, Mori complained: "It is time for all the party members to unanimously propose policy measures."

(8) TOP HEADLINES

Asahi, Sankei & Tokyo Shimbun:
Then Prime Minister Sato told U.S. in 1965 to use nuclear weapons in
TOKYO 00003483 009 OF 009

event of Japan-China war

Mainichi:
Aso-Yosano line revived over whether to specify consumption tax hike
three years from now

Yomiuri:
Financial crisis also hits Dubai, with number of workers dismissed

Nikkei:
Survey of 100 corporate chiefs: 86 PERCENT believe economic slump
getting worse

Akahata:
JCP Policy Planning Committee Chairman Koike calls in TV program for
ruling, opposition camps to devise measures to protect the
unemployed

(9) EDITORIALS

Asahi:
(1) Clarify how money from increased taxes will be used for social
security
(2) Step up efforts to rehabilitate those who abuse spouses

Mainichi:
(1) Local governments urged to set up safety net for job security
(2) Feeling of emptiness behind a series of random street murders

Yomiuri:
(1) With bailout of U.S. automakers, bankruptcy is avoided for a
while, but crisis will persist
(2) Announcement of test results: Make efforts to improve students'
academic ability

Nikkei:
(1) Collapse of WTO talks an emergency signal against protectionism
(2) U.S. Big-Three automakers must make painful decision

Sankei:
(1) Massive investment losses at universities perplex students
(2) Death of Japanese crested ibis: Returning animals to the wild
necessary

Tokyo Shimbun:
(1) Let's move forward with a smile at year's end

Akahata:
(1) Improve nursing-care system and increase facilities

